Magazine Says 400 Reporters Aided Agency

Did Senate Panel Cover for CIA?

By Lance Gay
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The Senate Intelligence Committee last year bowed to pressure from the CIA to cover up the full extent of the participation of American correspondents who have secretly carried out assignments or given information to the agency, according to a new report.

In an article published in the Oct. 4 issue of Rolling Stone, which went to press last night, investigative reporter Carl Bernstein says more than 400 American journalists worked for the CIA in the last 25 years — far more than previously reported.

Furthermore, the story said that Sen. Frank Church's Senate Intelligence Committee — which looked into the CIA's connection with American journalists — deliberately misrepresented the dimensions of the situation after intensive lobbying by CIA officials.

BERNSTEIN SAID former CIA Directors William Colby and George Bush persuaded the committee to restrict its inquiry into the problem and to issue a final report that was couched in "deliberately vague and sometimes misleading terms."

He quotes one unnamed senator as saying that "from the CIA point of view, this was the highest, most sensitive cover program of all."

Colby, reached in Syracuse, N.Y., last night, said he had no recollection of any such activity on his part.

"A Senate committee wouldn't agree to deliberately misrepresent a thing like that," Colby said, declining further comment until he could read the story.

Colby did say he urged the committee not to make any of the names of journalists who have cooperated with the CIA public — a stance he and other CIA officials have consistently maintained in an effort to protect intelligence sources.

Church, who was flying back to Washington from West Virginia last night, could not be reached for comment. But his wife said "it's ridiculous" to think that Church — a constant CIA critic — would have covered up any part of the Senate investigation into the agency.

The charges in the article also brought a round of denials from almost all of the news agencies Bernstein named.

Bernstein, the former Washington Post reporter who co-authored the books "All the President's Men" and "The Final Days," said records on file at CIA headquarters show that some publishers, high-level editors and broadcast company officers cooperated with the agency by hiring CIA operatives or by instructing their reporters to provide information to the agency.

The article says that some Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists, well-known columnists and network correspondents were among those with CIA links, and claims that the most valuable "assets" for the agency were found in The New York Times, CBS and Time magazine. Among other news organizations cited as having cooperative arrangements with the CIA were The Louisville Courier-Journal, the Copley News Service, ABC and Newsweek magazine.

THE STORY FURTHER contends that from 1950 to 1966, the New York agents under arrangements approved by the late Publisher Arthur Hays Sulzberger. Furthermore, Bernstein says William Paley, chairman of the board of CBS, and the late Henry R. Luce, founder of Time and Life magazines, approved of the use of their organizations as operating covers for intelligence agency officers abroad.

But the story does not name the 400 and makes few new disclosures of people involved with the agency other than have been previously disclosed in articles written since The Washington Star first reported the existence of journalists doubling as CIA contacts in 1973.

According to the Rolling Stone article, the files compiled by the CIA on its relationships with American journalists — summaries of which were given to the Senate Intelligence Committee last year — "contain reports of specific tasks" undertaken by New York Times columnist C.L. Sulzberger and syndicated columnists Joseph and Stewart Alsop.

"Yes, if you have a chance to help your country, it's your job to do so," Joseph Alsop told UPI last night. "I've never taken orders, I've never done anything I haven't believed in."

In a statement last night, the New York Times said it has "absolutely no information" to add to a statement issued last year by publisher Arthur Ochs Sulzberger. In that statement, Sulzberger said: "I have never heard of the Times being approached either in my capacity as publisher or the son of the late Mr. Sulzberger."

Richard Salant, president of CBS News, said he has seen no evidence that Paley ever had an arrangement with the intelligence agency, although a CBS spokeswoman conceded that some of the network's correspondents briefed the CIA in the 1950s. "It was common at the time and all the news media did it — ABC, NBC, The New York Times, UPI," she said.

Marvin Zim, a Time, Inc., spokesman said his company had no evidence that any Time correspondent was ever an agent of the CIA. UPI's editor-in-chief, H.L. Stevenson, said, "On the basis of our own internal investigations, we are satisfied that no current UPI personnel are involved directly or indirectly with the CIA."

In the article, Bernstein said that one "of the agency's most valuable personal relationships in the 1950s" was with Washington Star correspondent Jeremiah O'Leary.

The article quotes unnamed "CIA officials" as saying that O'Leary's involvement with the agency went beyond normal reporting activities and involved assessing and spotting of prospective agents.

DAVID PHILLIPS, the former chief of the CIA's Western hemisphere desk, last night categorically denied that statement.

Phillips further said he would be willing to testify to this in court.

O'Leary also denied the contention of the unnamed CIA officials in the Bernstein story.

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